

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3949

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, AG, SS SAHRAOUI

SUBJECT: SAHARA: MORE ON SAHRAOUI REPUBLIC

REF: ALGIERS 522

1. FOREIGN JOURNALISTS CONVOKED TO DESERT FEB 27 FOR CEREMONY ATTENDING PROCLAMATION OF SAHRAOUI REPUBLIC HAVE PROVIDED US FOLLOWING BACKGROUND ON EVENT, WHICH TOOK PLACE LATE FEB 27. CEREMONY WAS HELD AT A SPOT IN DESERT THREE HOURS BY LANDROVER FROM TINDOUF. POLISARIO SPOKESMAN TOLS JOURNALISTS THAT PLACE WAS "IN BIR LAHLOU AREA". PERSONS WITH WHOM JOURNALISTS SPOKE SAID MOROCCANS WERE NEARBY.

2. SOME THREE THOUSAND HIGHLY FESTIVE SAHRAOUIs WHO ATTENDED CEREMONY FIRED WEAPONS INTO AIR AND GENERALLY WHOOPED IT UP AT CERMONY. POLISARIO SECYGEN EL OUALI WAS MAIN SPEAKER. JOURNALISTS SAID HE HAD BEEN SUCCEDED TEMPORARILY BY INTERIM SECYGEN LAROUSSE SO THAT HE MIGHT DEVOTE MORE TIME TO "MILITARY
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MATTERS," AND THAT HE HAD NEVER IN FACT BEEN OUT OF OFFICE.

3. PRIOR TO THEIR DEPARTURE FROM TINDOUF FOR DESERT CEREMONY JOURNALISTS ATTENDED POLISARIO PRESS CONFERENCE. HIGHLIGHT OF TINDOUF STOPOVER WAS VISIT TO HOSPITAL DURING WHICH FOREIGN AND ALGERIAN TV CREWS FILMED NUMBER OF WOUNDED. THESE PERSONS WERE DESCRIBED AS CIVILIANS AND THEIR WOUNDS SAID TO HAVE RESULTED FROM MOROCCAN GUN FIRE AND NAPALM BOMBING.

4. IN CONVERSATION WITH DCM FEB 28 FONMIN NORTH AMERICAN AND WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR ABERKANE SAID TIMING OF PROCLAMATION OF SAHARAN REPUBLIC DIRECTLY RELATED TO SPANISH WITHDRAWAL FROM TERRITORY. ABERKANE SAID HE HAD NOT FOCUSED ON RECOGNITION QUESTION AND SPECULATED THAT GOA'S RECOGNITION OF POLISARIO MIGHT IMPLY CARRY-OVER RECOGNITION OF SAHARAN REPUBLIC. HE ADDED THAT , WERE NEW ACT OF RECOGNITION NECESSARY, GOA WOULD CERTAINLY DO THE NECESSARY.

5. ONE IMPORTANT THING FOR GOA, ABERKANE WENT ON TO SAY, WAS THAT NEW REPUBLIC HE CALLED "SAHRAOUI" , NOT "SAHARAN". THHIS APPELLATION MORE IMPORTANT THAN "ARAB" OR "DEMOCRATIC" SINCE IT DESIGNATED CLEARLY THAT ONLY PEOPLE OF FORMER SPANISH SAHARA, AS OPPOSED TO ENTIRE POPULATION OF SAHARA DESERT, INVOLVED. PARKER

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